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CENTER FOR THE AMERICAN WOMAN AND POLITICS
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fact sheet

WOMEN IN STATE GOVERNMENT

In January 1986, 42 women serve in top statewide elective offices in 29 states, holding 14.2% of all such positions. 1,101 women hold seats in state legislatures (14.8%). 152 women were appointed to state cabinets in 1983 (15.1%).

Women in Statewide Elective Office

In addition to two women governors and five women lieutenant governors, 35 women are serving in statewide elective executive offices. Among these are the first women ever to be elected Attorneys General in any states. The number of women serving in top statewide positions reflects an increase over early 1984 when women held 37 such positions.[1]

GOVERNORS

Two women currently serve as governors: **Martha Layne Collins**, a Kentucky Democrat elected in 1983, and **Madeleine Kunin**, a Vermont Democrat elected in 1984. They bring to seven the total number of women ever to serve as governors; all seven have been Democrats.

The first woman governor was Nellie Tayloe Ross of Wyoming, elected in 1925 to replace her deceased husband. Ella Grasso of Connecticut was the first woman elected governor in her own right. She was elected in 1974 and again in 1978. The other women governors were Miriam "Ma" Ferguson of Texas (who served from 1925 to 1926 and again from 1933 to 1934), Lurleen Wallace of Alabama (who served from 1967 to 1969), and Dixy Lee Ray of Washington (who served from 1977 to 1980). Ferguson and Wallace were surrogates for their husbands who were ineligible to succeed themselves; Ray was elected in her own right.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS

Five women serve as lieutenant governors in 1986. They are **Nancy Dick** (D-CO), **Martha Griffiths** (D-MI) and **Marlene Johnson** (DFL-MN), elected in 1982, -- as well as **Harriett Woods** (D-MO) and **Ruth Meiers** (D-ND), elected in 1984.

The first woman to be elected as lieutenant governor was Consuelo Bailey of Vermont, elected in 1955. Bailey, a Republican, had previously served as Speaker of the state House of Representatives; thus, as lieutenant governor, she became the only woman in the country ever to have presided over both chambers of a state legislature.

OTHER STATEWIDE ELECTIVE POSITIONS

Attorney General
RI Arlene Violet (R)
VA Mary Sue Terry (D)

Corporation Commissioner
AZ Marcia Weeks (D)

Labor Commissioner
OR Mary Roberts (D)

Secretary of State[2]
AZ Rose Mofford (D)
CA March Fong Eu (D)
CO Natalie Meyer (R)
CT Julia Tashjian (D)
IA Mary Jane Odell (R)
MN Joan Anderson Growe(DFL)
NM Clara Jones (D)
OR Barbara Roberts (D)
RI Susan Farmer (R)
SD Alice Kundert (R)
WY Thyra Thompson (R)

State Auditor
AL Jan Cook (D)
AR Julia Hughes Jones (D)
KY Mary Ann Tobin (D)
MO Margaret Kelly (R)[3]
MT Andrea Hemstead (R)

State Treasurer
AL Annie Laurie Gunter (D)
AR Jimmie Lou Fisher (D)
DE Janet Rzewnicki (R)
ID Marjorie Ruth Moon (D)
KS Joan Finney (D)
KY Frances Jones Mills (D)
LA Mary Evelyn Parker (D)
NE Kay Orr (R)
NV Patty Cafferata (R)
OH Mary Ellen Withrow (D)
TX Ann Richards (D)

Superintendent of Public Instruction
AZ Carolyn Warner (D)
KY Alice McDonald (D)
WY Lynn Simons (D)

Public Service Commissioner
TN Jane Eskind (D)

Women in State Legislatures

In 1986 women hold 14.8% of all seats in state legislatures, 1,101 out of a total of 7,461 legislators. Since 1969, the number of women serving in state legislatures has more than tripled.

WOMEN STATE LEGISLATORS 1969-1985

Year	Women Legislators	% of Total Legislators
1969	301	4.0
1971	344	4.5
1973	424	5.6
1975	604	8.0
1977	688	9.1
1979	770	10.3
1981	908	12.1
1983	991	13.3
1984	996	13.4
1985	1,103	14.8
1986	**1,101**	**14.8**

Women hold 9.9% of all state senate seats (197 out of 1,995) and 16.5% of state house or assembly seats (904 out of 5,466). 54.1% of all women legislators are Democrats and 45.1% are Republicans. (A few women are independents or nonpartisan.)

Black women constitute 6.8% (75 out of 1,101) of women in state legislatures, 11 in senates and 64 in lower houses. Hispanic women constitute 1.2% (13 out of 1,101) of women state legislators, two in senates and eleven in lower houses.

The ten states with the highest percentages of women state legislators are:

State	% Women	State	% Women
New Hampshire	33.0	Maine	23.7
Vermont	26.1	Connecticut	21.9
Wyoming	25.6	Arizona	20.0
Colorado	24.0	Oregon	20.0
Washington	23.8	Florida	19.4

Women Appointed to State Cabinet Positions

In 1983, women were selected to fill 15.1% of appointed positions in governors' cabinets, 152 women out of a total of 1,009 appointed state cabinet officials.[4] This number includes cabinet level appointees who head state agencies or serve on governors' staffs. Of the 152 women serving in appointed state cabinet positions, one-fifth (20%) are serving in the field of health and social services. Women held a smaller proportion, 12.8% of all appointed state cabinet-level positions in 1981.

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[1]These numbers do not include women elected to the judiciary or women appointed to state cabinet-level positions.

[2]In addition to these elected secretaries of state, six states -- Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Texas and Virginia -- have appointed women secretaries of state.

[3]Kelly was appointed to fill out the term of the man who was elected to this post.

[4]Data were collected in the spring of 1983 by writing to every governor requesting a list of members of his cabinet. Figures include members of governors' staffs with cabinet status. Figures do not include elected cabinet officials. Information from Georgia was not available. The governors of Indiana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Carolina and Wyoming do not appoint cabinet members.

The Center for the American Woman and Politics maintains the National Information Bank on Women in Public Office (NIB) as part of its information services program. These data are the latest available in each area. Other sources include Martin Gruberg's Women in American Politics (Oshkosh, Wisconsin: Academic Press, 1968); the National Women's Education Fund; the Democratic National Committee -- Hispanic Affairs Division; and the Joint Center for Political Studies.

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